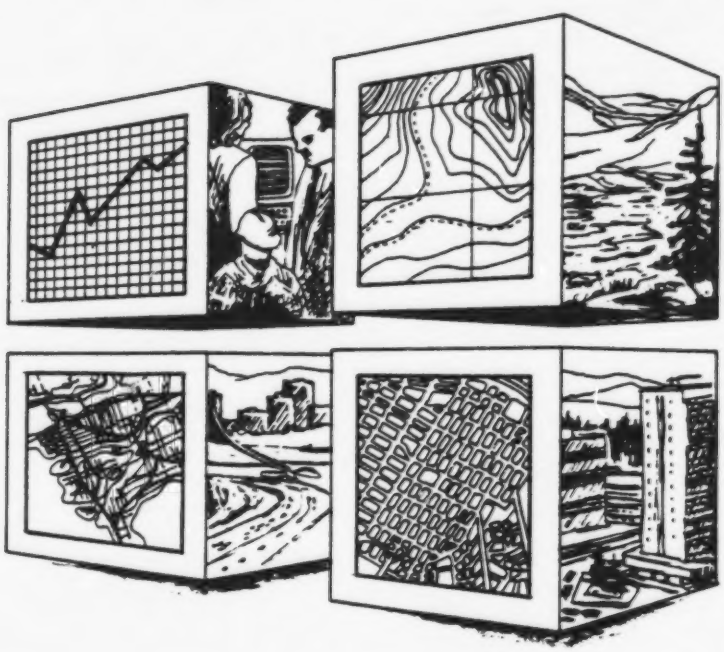
GVRD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Challenges for a Contemporary Statement of the Livable Region Strategy



A WORKING PAPER
PREPARED BY
THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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CHALLENGES FOR A CONTEMPORARY STATEMENT OF THE LIVABLE REGION STRATEGY

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Technical Advisory Committee
GVRD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
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PREFACE

For more than a decade the Livable Region Strategy identified broad regional development objectives for Greater Vancouver. This strategy was a cooperative municipal effort, and it helped shape the regional agenda and focus intermunicipal and intergovernmental energy during the late 1970s and into the early 1980s. It provided a context for developing rapid transit, building town centres, and improving environmental quality.

The accomplishments of the past decade have been considerable and many of the Strategy's objectives are well on the way. While there are notable achievements, there are also less positive aspects of the region's development which present current challenges to Greater Vancouver as a whole. Employment growth can no longer be taken for granted as it was in the early 1970s when the Strategy was developed. There is now an urgent need to provide a supportive climate for investment and new jobs. Proposed transportation improvements far exceed the ability to pay for them and there is a need to identify which will have the greatest benefit now and which later. And there is continued pressure on the region's unique environmental assets.

Some challenges facing the region are the result of continuing population growth and changing needs. Others are the product of fundamental international economic changes to which Greater Vancouver must adapt. Addressing these issues will require a clear focus on what needs to be achieved and a shared regional agenda on how to get there. The Livable Region Strategy has served well as a cooperative intermunicipal approach to regional development, but it needs refreshing to guide Greater Vancouver into the 1990s and beyond into the 21st Century.

Towards this end, the Technical Advisory Committee, which is composed of planning directors from all of Greater Vancouver's municipalities, has reviewed the adequacy of existing strategies to meet current and emerging regional development trends and needs. This working paper consolidates the Committee's work to date. The report evaluates existing regional development policies set out in the Livable Region Strategy and former Official Regional Plan in relation to current challenges facing Greater Vancouver. Preliminary directions for a contemporary statement of the Livable Region Strategy are identified.

PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this working paper is to present the preliminary basis for a contemporary statement of the Livable Region Strategy for the 1987 to 2001 period.

Part 1 reviews the historical sources of regional development concepts for Greater Vancouver, and describes the nature of a contemporary strategy. Part 2 reviews the goals expressed in the Official Regional Plan and Livable Region Strategy. In Parts 3 through 7, the report identifies the public purposes of existing regional development policy, and evaluates the current challenges for that policy. The topic areas of housing, employment, transportation, the environment and centres are addressed. In the concluding part, the report summarizes the main themes which could form the basis of a contemporary strategy.

1. The Basis for Local Government Regional Development Policy in Greater Vancouver

Local government regional development policy was expressed primarily in two documents -- the Official Regional Plan and the Livable Region Strategy. These documents, therefore, form the basis for analysis in this report.

The Official Regional Plan was first adopted in 1966 by the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board. It was updated in 1980 by the four regional districts in the Fraser Valley which had assumed responsibility for the portion of the Plan covering their area. It was, in essence, a land use regulation document administered by the GVRD Board. The Plan provided a development concept for Greater Vancouver and the Lower Mainland, and limited municipal zoning in accordance with the concept. The plan was cancelled with the removal of regional district regional planning powers by the provincial government in 1983.

The Livable Region Strategy was developed through extensive public involvement during the early 1970s, and implementation actions were adopted by the GVRD Board in 1975. It was designed to be proactive and provide a context for implementing specific development objectives. It distinguished between the goals and development concept which formed the strategy document, and an ongoing program of implementation actions.

The two strategies were complementary. They shared the same broad goals and development concepts but differed in their approach. The Official Regional Plan concentrated on achieving its goals through land use regulations binding municipalities. In contrast, the Livable Region Strategy endeavoured to focus political and administrative energy on realizing specific objectives such as regional town centres and light rail transit.

2. The Nature of Local Government Regional Development Policy in the 1987 to 2001 Period

At present, there is no "official" regional development strategy for the Greater Vancouver area, although the concepts of the former Official Regional Plan and Livable Region Strategy continue to have some public and political currency and are referred to in municipal community plans. There continues to be intermunicipal discussion of regional development trends through the committees of GVRD Development Services. This service operates on an annual contract and reports on an advisory and information basis through the Policy Coordinating Committee of Mayors and committees of municipal managers and planning directors.

The institutional environment suggests that a contemporary statement of the Livable Region Strategy will be advisory, with an emphasis on goals and a broad development concept for the region. The strategy will be implemented largely through the concepts being absorbed into municipal regulatory documents and capital programs, and through providing a context for focussing intermunicipal and intergovernmental action.

Specifically, the strategy should have four functions, as follows:

- To provide a comprehensive vision or statement of goals for Greater Vancouver. The strategy should express the nature of the region local governments are trying to achieve.

- To provide a context for plans by other organizations. The strategy should be a framework which guides and reinforces official community plans, and which provides a reference point for the plans of senior governments and the private sector.

- To provide a framework for raising issues of regional importance. As an advisory document, the strategy implementation relies on highlighting issues for public and political discussion. The strategy should provide a reference point and demonstrate how issues are interrelated.

- To provide a basis for focussing intermunicipal action. Like the original Livable Region Strategy, there should continue to be the distinction between the goals and development concept which should have some enduring value as the vision for the region, and the implementation actions which will rely on the current situation and political direction. The process should identify two or three major areas where local government political and administrative attention should be focussed.

As an advisory document, the process for establishing formal status for the strategy could be adoption by local governments to signify agreement with the goals and development concept. The implementation actions would form the work program for inter-municipal action by the Development Services committees or the GVRD Board.

PART 2 - REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. CURRENT GOALS

a) Livable Region Strategy Goals

The Livable Region Strategy was developed through extensive public participation. People were asked to identify their major concerns and these were translated into about 300 Livability Objectives. Subsequently, they were reduced to 31 objectives. Since the objectives were developed through public involvement, they generally reflect a personal or community view. The strategy sought to make a connection between regional development and the livability of the region experienced by individuals.

The following are the final objectives, generally consolidated by type, which were used to form the Livable Region Strategy:

Environment and Recreation

- To preserve the farmland now in GVRD.
- To keep the region as self-sufficient in food supply as possible.
- To preserve unique and wilderness areas such as foreshores and mountainsides.
- To preserve existing scenic areas and views.
- To reduce pollution of the air, water and land; and to reduce unwanted noise.
- To avoid increasing the number of people and amount of property subject to hazard of flood.
- To reduce the flood hazard to persons and property already located in the floodplain.
- To increase the choice of recreation places.
- To provide a variety of kinds of recreation -- bicycling, hiking, walking, nature study, etc.

Transportation

- To reduce time, cost and inconvenience of travel to work.
- To increase the choice of ways people can travel to central place facilities.
- To increase accessibility in general for persons unable to use a private automobile for personal transportation.
- To reduce distance and time of travel to exterior recreation for people living in the region.

- To have public transportation routes and stops which serve community facilities that are not located in shopping areas.
- To provide greater opportunities for people to live close to where they work.
- To provide people greater opportunities to work close to where they live.

Housing

- To moderate the increase in prices and rents of both new and existing housing.
- To prevent the cost of raw land for urban development from escalating out of line with general cost-of-living rises.
- To create opportunities in every part of the region for housing families and households at all income levels.
- To increase the choice of housing types and tenures available to families and households on the basis of their preferred lifestyles (eg. group housing, retirement communities, mobile homesites, etc.)

Quality of Residential Community

- To reduce the fear of change and disruption in existing residential communities.
- To increase feeling of community identification and local pride in all parts of the region.
- To ensure that new residential communities, whether publicly or privately developed, are provided from the outset with a full range of community services.
- To make daycare facilities available to all families of different age groups, size and housing requirements.
- To avoid growth and change causing local feelings of disruption and loss.
- To make easier (in time and convenience) comparison shopping for goods and services.
- To bring downtown type goods and services closer to local areas; to increase variety and choice available locally.
- To obtain lively and varied new or redesigned commercial areas that have interesting activity after normal business hours.

Government

- To provide people an opportunity to participate in government decisions.

- To capture for the public benefit a large share of any increases in land value created by public expenditures on transportation, public buildings and other services.

b) Official Regional Plan Goals

There were two types of goals in the Official Regional Plan. One type sought to "Preserve" features; they were largely directed to guiding the designations of land use. A second type sought to "Enhance" features; they were more concerned with the quality of development which occurred.

The following are the Official Regional Plan's goals:

Preserve:

- Farmland
- Floodplain and other hazardous areas
- Environmental quality
- Natural assets
- Renewable natural resources
- Economic viability
- Recreational opportunities
- Options for the future.

Enhance:

- Choice of housing, shopping and work places
- Range of job opportunities
- Community identity and self-sufficiency
- Access to an increased range of recreation opportunities
- Economic and efficient transportation for people and goods
- Access to and utilization of transit service
- Utilization of present public facilities
- Opportunities for industrial development and diversification
- Energy conservation
- Farming as an economically viable livelihood
- Contribution of ports to the regional economy.

2. CONTEMPORARY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The broad goals which characterize the type of community Greater Vancouver's residents desire are relatively stable. The emphasis among the goals and the specific objectives change over time but the underlying themes are constant.

Six broad themes should form the basis for the Livable Region Strategy, as follows:

- A Region in Nature.

  This goal seeks to maintain and enhance the region's close-to-nature character. It involves protecting natural areas for parks and recreation areas, wildlife habitat, or landscape value; protecting views of the mountains and the valley; bringing nature into the city through urban design; retaining farmland for its landscape value as well as other reasons. The close relationship between urban development and nature is prominent in residents' images of the region; it is much of what makes Greater Vancouver unique and is a major source of international identity and prestige.

- An Economy of Growth and Change

  This goal seeks a strong and growing regional economy, and one which is adapting to the changing international economy. It involves providing a supportive setting for economic growth, including a high quality regional image, attractive development areas, and a good transportation system.

- Mobility for People, Goods and Services

  This goal seek a region in which it is not difficult to travel to work, to shopping areas, to recreation, or to move goods. It involves both a good road system and a high quality transit system.

- A Healthy and Safe Region

  This goal seeks an environment which is supportive of good health and safety. It involves clean air and water, good parks and recreation services, adequate and good quality housing stock, a physical and spatial design which is functional and does not create undue stress in daily living, a safe and secure environment, accessible and equitably distributed social facilities and services, and an economy with jobs for all those who want them.

- An Equitable Region

  This goal seeks to ensure that the costs and benefits of regional development are equitably distributed, particularly endeavouring to improve the situation of the disadvantaged. It includes a transportation system which is accessible to all.

- An Efficient Region

  This goal seeks to develop a livable region with the most effective use of public funds. It includes intermunicipal cooperation on matters where there can be cost savings, and ensuring cost-effective development of land use, transportation and services.

PART 3 - HOUSING

1. CURRENT POLICY

a) The Livable Region Strategy

Population growth was a major concern in the Livable Region Strategy. The annual rate of growth in the early 1970s was about 3% and the GVRD's population was forecast to reach 1.5 million by 1986 and 2 million by the year 2000. There was the sense that growth was out of control and that Greater Vancouver was in danger of losing its high quality of life.

With respect to housing it was believed:

- that the distribution of housing growth in the outer suburbs while jobs were increasing in the central part of the region would result in more traffic congestion and longer commuting times;
- that rapid growth would consume the region's land supply for housing and increase pressure for development of agricultural land;
- that housing prices were escalating beyond reach and that people would be forced to choose housing which did not fully meet their needs;
- that rapid growth would create a situation where some municipalities would be overburdened with growth and could not afford to keep pace with the demand for community services.

The Livable Region program placed great emphasis on maintaining and enhancing the region's residential environment. Many of the Livability Objectives focussed on the quality of residential communities.

The major policy response to these concerns was to "Achieve residential growth targets in each part of the region". The strategy established 1986 population targets for major subregions such as the North East Sector and Northern Delta/Surrey. The growth shares were based upon thirteen criteria relating to minimizing land consumption, achieving high housing amenity, locating housing where it would best support the transportation concept, and respecting municipal objectives. The growth targets for the 1976-1986 period were higher than the trend growth pattern for the City

of Vancouver, the Burnaby/New Westminster area, and Richmond. The targets were lower than the trend for the North Shore, the North East Sector, Delta, and Surrey/White Rock.

TABLE 1 - LIVABLE REGION STRATEGY POPULATION GROWTH TARGET

	1971 ACTUAL	1986 TREND	1986 TARGET	1986 ACTUAL	DIFFERENCE
Vancouver/UEL	429,940	474,455	489,500	435,997	-53,503
Burnaby/New Westminster	168,495	226,070	248,500	185,133	-63,367
North Shore	127,115	182,245	167,000	142,294	-24,706
North East Sector	84,560	159,600	154,500	114,709	-39,791
Richmond	62,130	120,700	130,000	108,492	-21,508
Delta	45,935	98,000	77,500	79,783	+2,283
Surrey/White Rock	108,860	214,630	209,200	196,070	-13,130
Other	775	2,100	1,600	3,674	+2,074
GVRD TOTAL	1,027,810	1,477,800	1,477,800	1,266,152	-211,648

The strategy had two main objectives. First, it endeavoured to increase the population growth rate in the central part of the region close to where jobs were locating and where transportation and community services already existed. Second, it sought to reduce the growth rate in the outer suburbs which were distant from job growth and where municipalities did not have the financial base to keep up with the demand for community services.

In addition to the targets, but at a lower order of importance, the Livable Region Strategy had the objective of increasing residential densities. It encouraged infill, and therefore higher densities, within the developed parts of the region as a method of achieving residential growth targets. In the outer suburbs it encouraged smaller lot single family housing and compact housing as a means to reduce land consumption.

The policies also suggested that regional town centres incorporate substantial higher density housing within the centre or near by. Higher density housing was intended both to contribute to the mix of uses within centres and to help support transit use.

The Livable Region Strategy policies on housing were to be implemented by municipalities adjusting their development controls in relation to the targets and by "marshalling

positive action programs" such as the GVRD's compact housing demonstration program.

b) The Official Regional Plan

The Official Regional Plan update in 1980 was also predicated upon substantial population growth, with an increase of 460,000 persons expected between 1976 and 2001. Significant growth was anticipated in family households requiring single family or other ground-oriented housing.

TABLE 2 - OFFICIAL REGIONAL PLAN POPULATION GROWTH TARGETS

	1976	2001 TREND	2001 TARGET
Greater Vancouver	1,085,000	1,283,000	1,315,000
Central Fraser Valley	88,000	254,000	209,000
Dewdney-Alouette	52,500	73,500	140,000
Fraser Cheam	51,500	75,000	74,000
Lower Mainland Total	1,277,000	1,738,000	1,738,000

It was perceived that prevailing trends would result in more than half the population growth taking place in the Fraser Valley would be outside of Greater Vancouver since the demand for ground-oriented, inexpensive housing could be most easily met in this area. Most new jobs, however, were expected to be located within the City of Vancouver and its adjacent municipalities. The result of this trend would be increasing distance between job and residence locations, thereby increasing long distance travel demands. A second effect of the trend to development in the more rural areas would be rapid consumption of the residential land supply and increasing pressure for development on farmland and floodplain areas.

The plan addressed these concerns primarily through two strategies, both intended to provide a distribution and intensity of housing development which would support an efficient transportation system and minimize the pressure for development on farmland and floodplain. First, and most significantly, the plan encouraged modification of population distribution trends. The strategy sought to locate one-half of the total population growth within the Greater Vancouver Area and locate more of the growth occurring in the Valley to north of the Fraser River. Second, the plan promoted higher residential densities in both the Greater Vancouver Area and the Valley Towns.

The ORP strategies were implemented primarily by land use policies and designations. The policies limited development in environmental, farm and floodplain areas, and phased development in areas identified for urban uses. Higher density residential development was encouraged to locate in centres. In addition, the plan provided advisory residential settlement guidelines for urban areas. They were intended to increase residential densities and improve the quality of the residential environment.

c) The Public Purposes of Housing-Related Policies

Both the Livable Region Strategy and the Official Regional Plan addressed housing primarily from the perspectives of labour force location and land consumption. The following are the main public purposes of the strategies.

- Improving transportation was the most prominent purpose with respect to housing in both the Livable Region Strategy and the Official Regional Plan. They sought to reduce or defer the need for the public to provide costly transportation infrastructure, and to increase the opportunity for people to live close to work and thereby increase accessibility and livability. The main strategy objective was to counter the trend towards dispersion of residential development, and therefore labour force, in the outer suburbs and beyond into the Fraser Valley. The strategies endeavoured to relate residential growth, and therefore labour force growth, more closely to areas of job growth.

- To protect farmland for future use and to minimize residential development which is at risk from flood. This policy is also prominent in both the LRP and the ORP. The strategies endeavoured to locate residential development in a manner which would minimize development pressure. The public purposes were:

  - to preserve farmland for economic, self-sufficiency and landscape reasons,
  - to minimize the risk to life from floods,
  - to minimize the public cost of flood protection and compensation.

- To ensure that the region's limited land supply is used intensively. This policy appears in both the LRP and ORP. The strategies endeavoured to increase residential densities in order to minimize the rate of land consumption. The public purposes were:

- to husband the region's land supply thereby deferring problems, such as higher land prices, which would result from a constrained supply,
- to reduce land consumption and therefore the pressure for use of farmland and floodplain areas,
- to ensure that land close to areas of job growth supports an adequate labour force.

- To concentrate higher density housing in centres. This objective appears in both the LRP and ORP. The public purposes were:

  - to provide a resident population in centres which would keep them active beyond business hours and provide a more interesting urban environment,
  - to concentrate increased population near transit interchanges located in centres to facilitate transit development and use.

- To allow municipalities to absorb the effects of residential growth and to keep pace with the provision of community services. This objective appears only in the LRP. The strategy endeavoured to distribute residential growth among municipalities. The public purposes were:

  - to distribute among municipalities the financial burdens which arise from rapid growth,
  - to allow communities time to absorb the disruption of growth.

2. CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR REGIONAL POLICY

There are two aspects to consider - the current relevance of the existing strategy's public purposes and new public purposes not addressed by existing policy.

a) Current Policy

i. To reduce the demand for transportation facilities and to increase accessibility through altering land use trends.

Based upon current data, population growth is lower than anticipated by the LRP (see Table 1, Page 13) and more concentrated within the Greater Vancouver area than anticipated by the ORP. The LRP anticipated a GVRD population of 1.5 million in 1986; the actual figure is about 1.26 million. The ORP anticipated that trends would result in the GVRD having a 2001 population

of 1.28 million, about 74% of the Lower Mainland population; current forecasts suggest it will have about 1.43 million, about 84%. As a result, the jobs to labour force balance throughout the region will be better than anticipated.

A second aspect affecting this policy is the increasing dispersion of job and resident locations as the result of suburban employment growth and two-worker households. As employment grows in the suburbs so does cross-regional commuting. The growth of core-oriented travel demand, the major challenge addressed by the LRP and ORP, may therefore not be as great as anticipated.

While the pace of growth has slowed and therefore the potential and amount to be gained by altering land use growth trends is less prominent, the public purposes presented by the existing regional strategy continue to make sense. Particular emphasis should be placed on encouraging more potential for housing growth on the Burrard Peninsula. Job growth will continue in this area and additional housing will both offer the option for people to live close to work and slow the growth of traffic over water-crossings.

ii. To protect farmland for future use and to minimize residential development which is at risk from flood.

Provincial agricultural land preservation and floodplain controls are in place and provide a mechanism for reviewing developments in these areas.

The original justifications for directing housing growth eastward to minimize pressure for development of farmland and in the floodplain remain valid. This does not, however, preclude further development in these areas subject to review of farmland viability and floodplain controls.

iii. To ensure that the region's limited land supply is used intensively.

The corollary to the high rate of population growth forecast was that Greater Vancouver's residential land supply would be exhausted within twenty years. The result would be rising land prices and mounting pressure to use farmland and floodplain. A lower pace of growth suggests that the residential land supply will last longer than anticipated by LRP and ORP policies.

Current households forecasts suggest that ground-oriented housing will represent about 70% of housing construction during the next twenty years. This form of housing is the largest land consumer, although economic conditions and public preference suggest that a higher proportion will be compact or small lot housing.

Using residential land intensively continues to make sense for the longer term development of the region. The original justifications of husbanding the land supply and thereby minimizing pressure for development of farmland and floodplain remain valid.

iv. To concentrate higher density housing in centres.

The suburban centres in Greater Vancouver have considerable distance to go to be called fully formed. The original justifications for concentrating higher density housing in them remain valid. Additional housing will be required for the centres to develop an urban character, and to help support their role as major transit interchanges.

v. To distribute residential growth in a manner which allows municipalities to absorb the effects of and to keep pace with the provision of community services.

The slower pace of growth has resulted in municipalities actively encouraging residential development through such measures as streamlining approval processes rather than endeavouring to slow it. There is no need to continue this type of regional policy.

b. New Public Purposes

There do not appear to be major new public purposes of regional significance related to housing. There are not large areas of deteriorated housing; the housing market works reasonably well; good residential environments are being produced as a result of community planning; and there is ongoing investment in social housing, albeit at a modest level. As part of a regional strategy, there may need to be a regional policy on social housing as a basis for lobbying for continued senior government investment.

An emerging concern, although one which will not be prominent during the next decade, is the adaptability of the housing stock and residential environment to an older population. The average age of the region's population is increasing and there is a growing number of seniors. During the next decade, however, it is the middle-aged group which will grow most rapidly and have the greatest affect on the region. The senior population will grow much more slowly but will have an increasing impact on some parts of the region which are attracting a higher than average proportion of seniors.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The review of housing policy indicates that the main principles stated in the Livable Region Strategy and former Official Regional Plan of maintaining and enhancing the livability of residential communities, increasing opportunities for living close to work, minimizing pressure for development of floodplain and farmland, and using the limited land supply intensively remain a generally valid framework for developing a livable and efficient region. Within this general framework, the review suggests two areas which should be highlighted in policy for the next decade.

First, increasing opportunities for residential development within the Burrard Peninsula - the City of Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminster - is of importance in the distribution of residential growth. There will continue to be employment growth in this area and there should also continue to be significant residential development, both to minimize transportation demand and to permit increased opportunities for living close to work.

Second, greater attention should be given to concentrating higher density development in centres. Trends suggest a lessened demand for higher density housing in the next decade. If centres are to achieve the urban quality desired, a character which requires a significant residential population, then it will be necessary to concentrate the limited higher density development which will be produced in centres. In municipalities where there is less resolve to channel higher density housing to centres, it will be difficult for centres to achieve an urban character.

PART 4 - EMPLOYMENT

1. CURRENT POLICY

a) The Livable Region Strategy

The LRP's transportation strategy was in large part based upon altering trends in the distribution of labour force and employment growth, and thereby commuter travel growth. As discussed in PART 1, the location of residential growth, and therefore labour force, was one element of this strategy. The location of job growth is the other component.

The LRP was developed during a buoyant economic period and assumed employment growth. Issues relating to unemployment, the need for job growth, and the quality of employment were not among the concerns of the Citizens' Policy Committees, and they were not a focus for discussion at GVRD Board Seminars. The Livability Objectives underlying the strategy did not include these concerns.

Employment in the GVRD was forecast to increase from 426,166 in 1971 to 645,800 in 1986. The strategy assumed that if current trends prevailed, the City of Vancouver would get one out of every two new jobs. The principal objective of the strategy was to reduce this trend to one out of every five new jobs.

TABLE 3 - LIVABLE REGION STRATEGY EMPLOYMENT GROWTH TARGETS

	1971	1986 TREND	1986 TARGET	1986 ESTIMATE	DIFFERENCE
Vancouver/UEL	251,229	369,500	297,900	293,000	-4,900
Burnaby/New Westminster	67,723	106,000	111,500	91,000	-20,500
North Shore	31,795	42,000	51,700	48,000	-3,700
North East Sector	17,061	30,000	45,200	28,000	-17,200
Richmond	25,806	42,000	52,500	56,700	+4,200
Delta	8,439	15,000	22,300	18,000	-4,300
Surrey/White Rock	23,892	41,000	64,400	55,000	-9,400
Other	221	300	300	600	+300
GRAND TOTAL	426,166	645,800	645,800	590,300	-55,500

It was felt that if current trends prevailed:

- the transportation situation would be exacerbated by jobs concentrating in the City of Vancouver while labour force grew primarily in the outer suburbs. This would result in more long distance commuting and the demand for additional transportation facilities;

- opportunities for living close to work would be reduced, thereby diminishing livability;

- industrial and commercial assessment growth would be inequitably distributed.

The major policy response to these concerns was to "Promote a balance of jobs to population in each part of the region". This was expressed as targets for the ratio of resident workers to jobs for each part of Greater Vancouver. The targets sought significantly lower than trend employment growth for the City of Vancouver, to maintain the trends for the Burnaby/New Westminster area, and to increase the trend for other parts of the region. The effect would be to maintain the 1971 ratio of resident workers to jobs for the City of Vancouver, Burnaby/New Westminster, and Richmond areas and to lower the ratio for other areas.

The strategy acknowledged the difficulty of getting employment to locate as desired and stressed the need for positive decentralization policies. Two actions were prominent. One was the regional town centre strategy. Trends suggested that about 70% of employment growth would be in the service industries which were either population-dependent or site-flexible. The objective of the regional town centre strategy was to provide alternative locations to downtown Vancouver for site-flexible employment. A second action was to try to influence the future location of site-dependent industrial development by providing industrial parks and improved goods movement transportation facilities in the outer suburbs.

b) The Official Regional Plan

Like the Livable Regional Strategy, the Official Regional Plan update in 1980 assumed employment growth. Trends indicated that the number of jobs in the GVRD would grow from 490,000 in 1976 to 760,000 in 2001, an increase of 270,000 jobs. For the Lower Mainland as a whole, jobs were forecast to increase by 303,000 from 547,000 in 1976 to 850,000 in 2001.

Unlike the Livable Region Strategy, however, the ORP's objectives expressly recognized the need to protect and develop the Lower Mainland's economy. Included as development objectives were the following:

- Preserve economic viability.
- Enhance the range of job opportunities, farming as an economically viable livelihood, opportunities for industrial development and diversification, the economic and efficient movement of people and goods, and the contribution of ports to the regional economy.

While the development objectives identified the region's economic health as a concern, the plan's development strategy focussed primarily on the distribution of job growth to achieve transportation objectives. Similar to the Livable Region Strategy, the Official Regional Plan strategy was based upon the perceived trend for employment to concentrate within the Greater Vancouver area while labour force was dispersing in the Fraser Valley. The trend between 1971 and 1976 was for 89% of employment growth to locate within the GVRD and only 11% in the Valley. It was anticipated that this trend would prevail during the 1976 to 2001 period. At the same time, it was anticipated that 50% of Lower Mainland population growth would be in the Valley. The result would be increasing long distance commuting between the Valley and the metropolitan area and a demand for additional transportation facilities.

TABLE 4 - OFFICIAL REGIONAL PLAN EMPLOYMENT GROWTH TARGETS

	1976	2001 TREND	2001 TARGET
Greater Vancouver	490,000	760,000	725,000
Central Fraser Valley	25,000	15,000	60,000
Dewdney-Alouette	12,000	13,000	40,000
Fraser Cheam	20,000	5,000	25,000
Lower Mainland Total	547,000	850,000	850,000

The concern with transportation objectives was addressed through two strategy elements. One was to improve the balance in the distribution of jobs and labour force in all parts of the Lower Mainland. Employment growth distribution targets were established which were lower than trend growth for the GVRD and higher for the Valley regional districts. The second strategy element was to focus new commercial employment in the metropolitan core and regional centres.

Particular reference is made to encouraging more office jobs to locate in the regional town centres and valley towns.

The ORP policies were implemented primarily through land area policies and designations. The major initiative was to ensure that there was sufficient land for industrial activities protected from encroachment by other uses, and that rights-of-way for transportation infrastructure were protected. Areas were reserved for existing and future industrial development and for port/terminal development which includes both marine ports and airports. The transportation network map, which identifies major existing and future rights-of-way, was developed with consideration of goods movement requirements.

c) The Public Purposes of Employment-Related Policies

The following are the main public purposes of the employment-related strategies:

- To increase accessibility and reduce the demand for additional commuter transportation facilities through altering land use growth trends. This was the most prominent purpose in both the Livable Region Strategy and the Official Regional Plan.

- To help build regional town centres. Development of regional town centres was considered both a means and an objective in the Livable Region Strategy and the Official Regional Plan. It was a means in that town centres were intended to be good locations for office development, which might otherwise have the only option of downtown Vancouver. They were also an objective in that well developed multi-purpose centres were intended to contribute to the livability of the suburbs.

- To ensure sufficient land for industrial development and supporting transportation. Both the Livable Region Strategy and the Official Regional Plan assume employment growth. In the Official Regional Plan, however, the desire to maintain economic viability is clearly expressed. The public purpose of the policies is to ensure that the region's economic vitality is not constrained by the lack of suitable land for industrial growth.

2. CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR REGIONAL POLICY

a) Current Policy

i. To reduce the demand for additional transportation facilities and to increase accessibility.

The Livable Region Strategy's estimate for employment growth to 1986 was optimistic. A 1971 to 1986 growth estimate of 220,000 was used; based upon current estimates for 1986 employment, actual growth was about 173,000. The strategy was predicated upon the prospect of about 50% of the job growth between 1971 and 1986 locating in the City of Vancouver. The policy sought to lower this to about 20%. What actually occurred was that the City of Vancouver absorbed about 25% of job growth. For the Burrard Peninsula as a whole, the strategy set a target of 41% of job growth; actual growth was about 40%.

The data and estimates indicate significantly greater dispersion of employment than the trend anticipated by the Livable Region Strategy. Current estimates indicate that during the 1986 to 1996 period about 27% of job growth will locate in the City of Vancouver and about 42% in the Burrard Peninsula. Population-serving employment is following residential development to the suburbs; industrial development is seeking suburban locations where land is less expensive and transportation facilities accessible; and a growing segment of office employment and business services is locating in the suburbs. Employment is decentralizing throughout the region, although not as rapidly as labour force.

TABLE 5 - LIVABLE REGION STRATEGY RATIO OF JOBS TO RESIDENT WORKERS

	1971	1986 LPR TARGET	1986 ESTIMATE	1996 ESTIMATE
Vancouver/UEL	1:0.7	1:0.7	1:0.8	1:0.7
Burnaby/New West	1:1	1:1	1:1.2	1:1
North Shore	1:1.7	1:1.4	1:1.8	1:1.5
North East Sector	1:1.8	1:1.3	1:2.1	1:1.8
Richmond	1:1	1:1	1:1.1	1:0.9
Ladner/Tsawwassen	1:1.5	1:1	1:1.5	1:1.2
North Delta/North Surrey	1:1.8	1:3	1:1.9	1:1.7
White Rock/South Surrey	1:1.5	1:1.5	1:1.8	1:1.6

Achieving a balanced distribution of employment in order to reduce demand for transportation facilities and improve accessibility remains a valid public objective. Emphasis should continue to be placed on providing an attractive environment for employment growth in the eastern suburbs, particularly those south of the Fraser River. Labour force is growing most rapidly in this area and improving the jobs to resident worker balance will have the greatest benefit for transportation.

ii. To help build regional town centres.

Building regional town centres remains a valid policy objective. The centres are all at various stages of development and none has achieved the employment threshold desired. Concentrating suburban office and retail employment growth in centres will continue to be a challenge during the next decade. Office floorspace growth is likely to be slower; there is a considerable inventory of vacant space in the City of Vancouver; and there are a growing number of office parks along the major highways to absorb potential growth.

iii. To ensure sufficient land for industrial development and supporting transportation.

Ensuring an adequate land supply for these activities remains important to preserving the region's economic viability. With respect to industrial employment, current forecasts indicate very slow growth during the next decade, on the order of 1.2% to 1.7% per year or about 17,000 to 25,000 jobs in total. Analysis of the region's industrial land supply indicates that there is ample area for anticipated expansion and for relocation of firms from older industrial areas where the land use is changing.

With respect to port/terminal development, the situation is less clear. The future development of the region's ports, the technology which will be used, and the land requirements are uncertian. It would appear that there is ample land in general for port development but that certain parts of the region, such as the inner harbour, are constrained.

b. New Public Purposes

As has been discussed, the Livable Region Strategy and the Official Regional Plan both assumed employment growth and were primarily concerned with its distribution within the region to achieve transportation objectives. The Official Regional Plan, as a land use plan, also sought to ensure that enough land was reserved for industrial activities.

The assumption of employment growth is the most fundamental change in the region since the Livable Region Strategy and Official Regional Plan were prepared. They were based upon continued employment growth and an unemployment rate around the "full-employment" figure of 5%. Current forecasts also predict continued employment growth but suggest unemployment rates in the 10% to 15% range. For local governments, employment growth has changed from an assumed element of regional development to be managed to an objective to be actively pursued. This is evidenced by the growing number of municipal economic development initiatives and the interest of councils in the employment impact of development proposals. A new public purpose for the regional development strategy, therefore, is to more clearly support employment growth.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Employment for the Livable Region Strategy and Official Regional Plan was largely an issue of distribution to achieve better transportation flow. For the next decade, employment for the LRP will largely be an issue of creating an environment in which economic change and job growth are supported.

The principles set out by Livable Region Strategy and Official Regional Plan continue to remain important. There should be a reasonable balance in the distribution of employment for both transportation and equity reasons, with particular emphasis on growth south of the Fraser River which has a high labour force growth rate. Commercial development should continue to be focussed in regional town centres. Given the need to continue building the centres and the wide range of options for locating floorspace growth, this public purpose will remain important during the next decade. Ensuring sufficient land for longer term industrial growth will remain a valid principle, but not a high priority given the prospect of slow industrial growth and the ample land supply protected by municipal plans.

Greater Vancouver's livability during the next decade and beyond will depend upon continuing to create jobs and providing a setting within which the region's economy can adapt to new areas of employment growth. In large part this means continuing to pursue the objectives of the LRP and ORP, such as a high quality environment and a good transportation system. But it also means that greater attention should be given to identifying and enhancing other aspects of the region which can foster economic growth.

PART 5 - TRANSPORTATION

1. CURRENT POLICY

a) The Livable Region Strategy

Transportation was the central concern of the Livable Region Strategy -- the analysis of growth trends identified transportation as the major emerging regional issue; four of the five strategy elements were directed to achieving transportation objectives; and the success of the strategy was to be measured by achievement of growth distribution targets which would reduce travel demand, and by the development of transit facilities.

The LRP's transportation strategy had three elements:

- manage the distribution of labour force and job growth to reduce the rate of commuter travel growth;
- fully utilize existing facilities; and,
- provide new facilities as required, mainly public transit.

The first element, the growth management strategy, has been discussed in PARTS 1 and 2 of this working paper. The second element, the full utilization of the existing transportation system, had little prominence in the LRP report and was not addressed in the strategy. The report briefly identified a number of initiatives which could be taken. These included: traffic management programs designed to handle more traffic on existing roads; transit priority measures; a regional parking strategy; encouragement for car pooling; and changes to work hours. The expectation was that these initiatives would be pursued as part of the LRP implementation program.

The third element, the provision of public transit facilities, had a prominence in the strategy equal to that of managed growth. It was expressed as "Build an improved transit-oriented transportation system." Growth estimates indicated increased commuter travel across screen-lines even if managed growth objectives were achieved. The strategy sought to maintain accessibility within the region through

development of the transit system rather than through an emphasis on bridges and freeways. The strategy took the position that road development might alleviate congestion in the short term, but over the longer term would result in more suburban sprawl and a greater volume of traffic on City of Vancouver streets.

The strategy's objective was a major shift in travel towards a transit mode and the expenditure of most transportation funds on transit improvements. The strategy's target was an increase in daily trips by transit from 10% to 25-30% of overall urban travel. A wide range of transit improvements were identified, including light rapid transit connecting the regional town centres and downtown Vancouver, North Shore passenger ferries, suburban rail, fastbus, articulated trolleys, and improved local bus networks. These improvements would supplement the significant expansion of the bus system into suburban areas which had recently taken place.

While the focus of the strategy was on transit, the report also briefly mentioned the need to improve local arterials, to improve the system for transporting goods throughout the region, to increase access to recreational areas by transit, and to plan provincial and national transportation systems which were compatible with regional objectives.

The most prominent transportation improvement proposed in the strategy was development of light rail transit connecting the regional town centres and downtown Vancouver. High quality public transit, with the centres acting as both major stops along the light rail line and interchanges with the bus system, and efficient goods movement were seen as preconditions for successful development of the town centres. Ease of automobile access was also seen as a requirement to attract business and government to the town centres.

b) The Official Regional Plan

The Livable Region Strategy's concern with the increasing length of the average journey to work as the result of the forecast distribution of residence and job locations was echoed in the Official Regional Plan. As discussed in PARTS 1 and 2, a major element in the ORP strategy was to provide a

better balance in the distribution of labour force and jobs between Greater Vancouver and the Valley. It was estimated that prevailing trends would require a doubling of highway capacity between the two areas by 2001.

The Plan's development objectives included the enhancement of "Economic and efficient transportation for people and goods" and "Access to and utilization of transit service." These objectives were expressed in the Plan's development concept as "...(urban areas) linked by efficient transportation facilities..." and in the Lower Mainland Development Strategy as "Provide transportation and physical services in a way which will reinforce the development concept."

Echoing the Livable Region Strategy, the ORP identified as a key element in the strategy the provision of a high degree of access among the major centres of the Lower Mainland and the metropolitan core. Consolidating higher density development, the plan indicated, would permit the provision of regional and local transit services at an acceptable cost.

The Plan's Development Concept Map for 2001 illustrated proposed major transportation improvements. It showed the Livable Region Strategy's light rapid transit route, and desired improvements in the Lower Mainland highway system including a river crossing between Langley Township and Maple Ridge.

The transportation policies were implemented through the Transportation Network Map. The purpose of the map was to reserve rights-of-way for future highway and transit developments.

c) The Public Purpose of Transportation Policies

Transportation is at the core of both the Livable Region Strategy and the Official Regional Plan. The following are the main public purposes of the strategies:

- To improve accessibility within Greater Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. Both the LRP and ORP anticipated significant growth in travel demand. The approaches - the management of growth, full use of existing facilities, and the provision of additional facilities with an emphasis on transit - were intended to maintain and enhance the ease of travel.

- To reduce or defer the need for additional transportation infrastructure. Reducing the need for public transportation expenditure was the major justification for the strategies.

- To significantly improve the public transit system within Greater Vancouver. This purpose is particularly evident in the Livable Region Strategy. It sought to change the approach to serving peak period transportation demand from a reliance on additional road capacity to reliance primarily on transit. This fundamental shift was intended to maintain accessibility while avoiding the development of freeways which would disrupt communities.

- To use transportation, particularly public transit, to support the development of regional town centres. Town centres were a key element in achieving a better balance in the distribution of jobs and were intended to contribute to livability by providing well-developed multi-purpose centres in the suburbs. High capacity public transit connecting the major suburban centres with downtown Vancouver was seen as a prerequisite for their success. Regional centres would also be the hub of suburban bus transit networks, contributing to improved efficiency and greater use of these services.

- To ensure that rights-of-way would be available for future transportation developments. The purpose of reserving rights-of-way was to preclude development which would be disrupted when the corridor was required.

2. CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR REGIONAL POLICY

a) Current Policy

i. To improve accessibility within Greater Vancouver and the Lower Mainland.

The strategies of both the LRP and ORP were intended to ease travel within the region. Accessibility was defined in broad terms to include access to jobs, commerical areas and recreation for all residents of the region. The focus of the strategies, however, was on commuter travel, particularly to downtown Vancouver.

Table 6 presents the 1986 trend and managed growth projections for travel across major screenlines. These data were developed for the 1979 Rapid Transit Project but are based upon the same growth distribution principles as the Livable Region Strategy. Table 6 also presents actual volumes for the fall of 1985.

TABLE 6 - PROJECTED AND ACTUAL TRAVEL ACROSS MAJOR SCREENLINES

(7-9 AM PEAK DIRECTION PERSON TRIPS)

	PROJECTIONS OF RAPID TRANSIT PROJECT (1979)*					
	1986 TREND		1986 MANAGED		1985 ACTUAL	
LOCATION	TOTAL	BY TRANSIT	TOTAL	BY TRANSIT	TOTAL	BY TRANSIT
1st Narrows	12,650	3,900	11,850	3,650	12,040	2,850
2nd Narrows	11,350	1,400	12,400	1,700	12,760	900
SeaBus	2,050	2,050	1,750	1,750	1,330	1,330
Total Burrard	26,050	7,350	26,000	7,100	26,130	5,080
Total Downtown Vancouver (1)	67,200	33,200	63,050	29,300	69,225	26,515
Boundary Road	65,150	17,100	54,700	14,000	45,430	8,290
Fraser North Arm	25,550	6,300	22,500	4,250	26,140	5,050
Total Vancouver (2)	105,400	29,350	90,700	23,650	84,940	17,520
Burnaby-Coquitlam	39,450	5,150	28,100	3,350	31,010	2,590
Massey Tunnel	15,100	3,750	9,150	1,800	14,025	2,340
Pattullo)					9,130	870
)	20,800	2,500	14,300	1,350	17,480	1,375
Port Mann)					8,350	505
Alex Fraser	9,400	0	5,700	0	0	0
Total South Arm	40,600	6,250	26,300	3,150	31,510	3,710

* Mid point of projected range
(1) Includes False Creek, Neck, First Narrows and SeaBus
(2) Includes North Arm, Boundary, First Narrows and SeaBus

As Table 6 illustrates, there was a close match between the target volumes across Burrard Inlet and the 1985 actual volumes, although transit ridership was lower than anticipated.

Actual peak period commuter travel to the City of Vancouver was lower that anticipated under the managed targets. It would appear that lower than expected job growth in the City and higher than anticipated labour force growth have led to fewer commutes than anticipated.

The increase in population serving employment South of the Fraser River has led to travel volumes across the South Arm closer to the managed growth targets than the estimated trend. A similar situation pertains for commuting volumes between the North East Sector and Burnaby.

Overall, the growth in travel volumes have been reasonably close to the managed growth targets. This has resulted for a variety of reasons. The principal one is a more balanced distribution of labour force and employment throughout the region than trends during the 1970s indicated. As Table 7 illustrates, the majority of work trips for all subregions, with the exception of Vancouver's downtown core, start and finish within the subregion. The rising level of congestion on the regional transportation system has played a role in both increasing labour force growth close to the concentration of jobs on the Burrard Peninsula and the rate of employment growth in the suburbs.

TABLE 7 - HOME TO WORK TRIPS
(GVRD ORIGIN-DESTINATION SURVEY, 1985)

FROM/TO	NORTH SHORE	VANC. CBD	REST OF BURRARD PENINSULA	N.E. SECTOR	S. OF FRASER	RICH	EXTERNALS	TOTAL
North Shore	17,395	12,665	12,587	598	670	1,151	950	46,016
Vancouver CBD	539	3,564	6,368	171	184	531	161	11,518
Rest of Burrard Peninsula	6,825	40,921	108,634	4,336	7,049	13,799	2,989	184,553
N.E. Sector	1,186	4,753	16,553	9,467	2,448	1,314	1,577	37,298
S. of Fraser	1,354	7,192	22,499	2,597	31,619	8,549	4,357	78,167
Richmond	653	5,600	11,542	193	1,400	16,267	353	36,008
Externals	529	1,699	6,447	2,668	5,095	1,010	14,248	31,696
Total	28,481	76,394	184,630	20,030	48,465	42,621	24,635	425,256

In addition, the proportion of cross-regional and counter flow commuting appears to be increasing and may also assist to moderate the growth of traffic congestion. This has resulted primarily from the dispersion of employment in the suburbs. A further factor is the growing number of part-time workers. About 17% of the region's labour force works part-time and may commute outside of peak travel periods. About 50% of service industry jobs, the fastest growing employment sector, is part-time.

Two qualifications should be noted in comparing the managed growth targets and the actuals in Table 6. First, Greater Vancouver's economy was still recovering from the recession in 1985 and a healthier job level would be reflected in higher screenline volumes. Second, capacity limitations at water crossings cause a spreading of peak flows. The two hour volume is therefore more a measure of what can get through rather than what wants to get through.

A comprehensive analysis of the prospects for regional transportation demand growth to 1996 was undertaken by the GVRD in 1983. The estimates are presented in Table 8. Recent analysis using the GVRD Transportation Model confirms the estimated growth levels.

TABLE 8 - COMMUTER TRAVEL GROWTH ACROSS MAJOR SCREENLINES
(Morning Peak Two Hours Person Trips)

	1973 VOLUMES	1981 VOLUMES	ANNUAL GROWTH	1996 ESTIMATES	ANNUAL GROWTH
Vancouver CBD*	52,388	58,906	1.5%	70,000	1.2%
Burrard Inlet	22,500	25,578	1.6%	28,500	0.7%
Boundary Road	37,000	44,397	2.3%	56,000	1.6%
Fraser North Arm	14,000	25,105	7.6%	39,000	3.0%
Fraser South Arm	19,500	31,063	6.0%	44,500	2.4%
Burnaby-Coquitlam	21,000	30,308	4.7%	38,000	1.5%
GVRD East Boundary	7,000	12,592	7.6%	22,500	3.9%
Total Inbound	173,388	227,949	3.5%	298,500	1.8%

*Excludes First Narrows and Seabus, which is included in Burrard Inlet.

During the 1973 to 1981 period, commuter travel across major screenlines grew annually by 3.5%. Investment in transportation infrastructure, however, did not keep pace. Travel growth consumed excess capacity in the system resulting in increased congestion particularly at water crossings and on major Burrard Peninsula road links.

As illustrated by Table 8, commuter travel growth across major screenlines is forecast to slow to 1.8% per year during the period to 1996. This is the result of both anticipated slower growth in labour force and employment, and a more balanced distribution of residence and job locations. The recession has brought some short-term relief but it can be expected that anticipated employment growth during the coming decade, and therefore commuter travel growth, will continue to erode accessibility. The considerable inventory of vacant office floorspace in downtown Vancouver suggests that the issue of downtown commuting will re-emerge as the economy recovers. Addressing this challenge will require both improvements to the existing system, in particular major arterials on the Burrard Peninsula, and endeavouring to get more capacity out of the existing system through traffic management.

ii. To reduce or defer the need for additional transportation facilities.

Minimizing public transportation facility costs was a central challenge for the LRP and ORP. It was felt that the growth in travel demand as the result of the distribution of labour force and employment growth would far outstrip the ability of governments to finance facilities and thereby lead to a deterioration of accessibility.

Expenditure on roads and transit within Greater Vancouver has increased considerably in recent years, as Table 9 and 10 illustrate. This has resulted even though commuter growth is reasonably close to the managed growth targets.

TABLE 9 - EXPENDITURES ON ROADS IN GREATER VANCOUVER ($000)

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
MUNICIPAL							
Capital	37,877	37,714	37,764	68,112	70,416	81,214	78,389
Maintenance	46,309	53,484	60,523	76,382	73,861	76,200	86,964
TOTAL	**$ 84,186**	**91,198**	**98,287**	**144,494**	**144,277**	**157,414**	**165,353**
PROVINCIAL							
Capital	28,876	37,468	55,237	36,338	65,186	145,166	NA
Maintenance	10,528	11,740	13,337	13,534	14,800	13,822	NA
TOTAL	**$ 39,404**	**49,208**	**68,574**	**49,872**	**79,986**	**158,988**	**NA**
Total Capital	66,753	75,182	93,001	104,450	135,602	226,380	NA
Total Maintenance	56,837	65,224	73,860	89,916	88,661	90,022	NA
TOTAL	**$ 123,590**	**140,406**	**166,861**	**194,366**	**224,263**	**316,402**	**NA**

PROVINCIAL MUNICIPAL

SOURCE: MUNICIPAL STATISTICS AND MIN. OF TRANSPORTATION AND HIGHWAYS, ANNUAL REPORT

TABLE 10 - GREATER VANCOUVER TRANSIT SYSTEM EXPENDITURE

FISCAL YEAR	OPERATING	CAPITAL	TOTAL SYSTEM EXPENDITURE
1980-81	$92,825,419	$10,950,581	$103,776,000
1981-82	$114,559,387	$19,194,379	$133,753,766
1982-83	$126,732,452	$11,190,874	$137,903,326
1983-84	$125,337,128	$13,818,483	$139,155,611
1984-85	$110,493,499	$17,885,330	$128,378,829
1985-86	$137,563,016	$18,724,064	$156,287,080
1986-87	$167,423,480	$96,645,099	$264,068,579

*Fiscal Years 85-86 and 86-87 include Skytrain

Source: B.C. Transit

At present there is a large number of road and transit improvements under discussion. Table 11 presents some of the major ones and their estimated costs.

Table 11 - Proposed Major Road and Transit Investments

Road		Rapid Transit	
Boundary Road Bridge	$100-200m	ALRT Extension to Scott Rd-Whalley	$100m
Pitt River Crossing	100-200m	ALRT Extension to Lougheed	$180m
Alex Fraser Extra Lanes	50-100m	ALRT Extension to Coquitlam	$400-525m
Widening Highway #1	50-100m		
Lougheed Widening	20- 30m		
Cassiar Connector	60-100m		
Grandview Cut Arterial	75- 85m		
Waterfront Road	50- 60m		
Lions Gate Reconstruction	50- 75m		
Massey Tunnel Addition	75-125m		

Minimizing public transportation facility costs remains an important public objective, although a different perspective is required than that of the LRP and ORP. Those strategies were based on the view that altering trends in the distribution of labour force and employment would substantially reduce the need for transportation expenditure. Recent forecasts, however, suggest that growth will be slower and the distribution reasonably balanced. There is, therefore, less potential for savings as the result of altering land use patterns.

Alternatively, the focus for the 1986 to 1996 period should be on achieving the most cost-efficient expenditure among possible projects. During the past decade attention has been devoted to building SkyTrain and the Alex Fraser Bridge. There are many possible projects for the next decade but no clear idea on which will have the greatest impact on improving accessibility. There is a need to identify which should be undertaken now and which later, and to work with the provincial government to achieve those priorities.

iii. To improve the public transit system.

Improving the public transit system remains an important public purpose, although the reasons and level of emphasis have changed since the LRP was formed. The LRP sought a fundamental shift in travel towards transit for personal travel. Since the early 1970s, there has been considerable progress with the formation of a special purpose transit agency, the introduction of the Seabus, the development of SkyTrain linking some of the major centres, and an improved bus system.

A number of factors, however, suggest that a fundamental shift towards significantly greater use of transit is unlikely. There is an increasing dispersion of residence locations and work places, a pattern which is difficult to serve by transit. In addition, the region's fastest growing population group during the coming decade is the middle-aged which tends to have high car ownership and a low propensity to use transit.

It would also appear that further transit improvements will be increasingly difficult to achieve. The high cost of SkyTrain may slow its extension to connect other major centres. The difficulty in financing the transit operating deficit will discourage improvements to the level of bus service.

There are three main reason, however, to continue to place emphasis on development of the transit system. First, many transit riders have no alternative transportation; many are the young, the elderly, and the poor. While the number of children in Greater Vancouver will remain largely constant, there will be a growing number of older residents. This suggests that over the longer term, a growing proportion of the region's residents will rely on transit for basic accessibility. In addition, the growing proportion of lower wage service jobs suggests that there will be a growing number of workers who will require transit. Second, transit is a factor in the development of major centres. Third, developing a region which has mobility based upon more than one transportation mode increases the resilience to a major shock such as a significant increase in the price or limit in the availability of oil.

iv. To support development of regional town centres.

There is a continuing public purpose for developing the major centres, as will be discussed in PART 7 of this working paper. Linking the major centres with higher capacity transit and using the centres as interchange focal points has helped to build the centres. Public investment in transit connecting the major centres is a clear signal to the development industry of long term public commitment. The major centres also require good road access, particularly to support retail and business service functions.

In addition to the major centres, there is increased emphasis on the importance of smaller municipal centres. Their use as bus transit focal points can help to support their development.

v. To ensure that corridors are available for future transportation developments.

Both the LRP and ORP identified major transportation development corridors. The ORP took this one step further by designating rights-of-way on the Transportation Network Map.

Identifying alignments for transportation capacity improvement continues to be a key purpose of regional planning. The contemporary statement of the LRP should identify the major links in the system required to maintain accessibility. The specific alignments or rights-of-way, however, should be the subject of future work among the affected municipalities.

b. New Public Purposes

There are two public purposes which were mentioned in the LRP but with little prominence -- neighbourhood protection and goods movement. These objectives will be of greater importance during the next decade.

Increased traffic on neighbourhood streets, particularly in the City of Vancouver, was cited in the LRP as one result of trend growth. The alternative was to shift a substantial proportion of core-directed traffic to transit. Traffic volumes have grown and, with no significant shift towards transit for core-directed travel and few road improvements, there has been increased commuter and truck traffic on residential streets. Reducing this pressure will be a more prominent public purpose during the coming decade. Endeavouring to increase transit ridership will continue to be important, but more attention may have to be given to measures such as local traffic regulations and arterial improvements.

Improving the road and rail systems for goods movement was also mentioned in the LRP. It has not been a significant issue during the last decade, possibly because the level of congestion has not hampered trucking and the economic downturn dampened the level of activity. During the next decade, local governments will be more concerned with providing a supportive environment for economic growth. Trucking within the region is likely to increase as the number of distribution and manufacturing points increases and disperses. Greater attention to the movement of goods within the region will be required.

A third challenge for the next decade, and the primary challenge, is improving the process for planning and funding transportation development. The SkyTrain has significantly increased the public cost of transit; any additions to the system have major funding implications. There is a wide range of road improvements which municipalities are pursuing with the provincial government independently. Lacking is a regional transportation strategy which relates roads and transit, and a coordinated approach to determining which improvements will bring the greatest return in accessibility.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The review of transportation policy suggests three major factors which should be central to a contemporary statement of the LRP.

First, the strategy should support continued effort to develop a coordinated transportation and land use planning process. Major transportation decisions involving significant financial commitments are being made in a disjointed manner. Minimizing the burden of financing transportation while maximizing the return in accessibility are required if Greater Vancouver is to remain livable and competitive.

Second, trends in the growth of labour force and employment will result in the growth of commuter travel congestion, particulary at river crossings and on the Burrard Peninsula. Addressing this challenge will require: continued emphasis on a balanced distribution of growth, particularly supporting additional housing on the Burrard Peninsula and facilitating employment growth south of the Fraser River; additional measures to fully utilize the existing system; and a balance of new road and transit facilities.

Third, greater attention should be given to other goals which enhance the region's livability and its attractiveness for economic growth. The protection of neighbourhoods from through traffic is a prominent livability goal. Ensuring an adequate goods movement system within the region is necessary for an efficient economy.

PART 6 - ENVIRONMENT

1. CURRENT POLICY

a) The Livable Region Strategy

Protection of the natural environment was prominent among the LRP's livability objectives. This goal was expressed in the strategy as: "Protect and Develop Regional Open Space". The approach was one of "open space conservancy", encompassing not only publicly-owned parks but also scenic views, important ecological assets, hiking trails, and other natural areas.

A map illustrated the conservancy areas, some major park and conservation reserves and others multi-use areas. The park and conservation reserves were intended for acquisition where they were not already in public ownership. The multi-use areas included scenic view areas, unusual landscapes, and natural areas where public access should be protected. The natural features of these areas were to be protected through measures other than outright purchase. Priority sites were identified.

Implementation of the parks and conservation reserves was to be largely through the GVRD Regional Parks program of land acquisition and development, with the emphasis on development. The strategy called for additional funds for the program. It also suggested working with other agencies on the protection of natural areas and those with recreational potential.

In the multi-use areas, implementation was to be through a wide range of measures which would preserve natural assets at the time of development. These included land use regulations which protected open space values, and requirements for ecological impact studies. This approach also sought co-operative development with public agencies, for instance use of rights-of-way as linear parks.

The strategy document included farmland and floodplain under open space, noting that both were controlled by provincial

and Official Regional Plan regulations. The Agricultural Land Reserve had been recently enacted and the secondary reserves were still under discussion. The report called for a study of farm viability. With respect to floodproofing, the document encouraged additional protection and contingency plans.

b. Official Regional Plan

Environmental concerns in the Official Regional Plan were related to farmland and floodplain, and recreation and open space. The protection of farmland and floodplain were taken as givens, and the issue for the Plan was to redirect growth away from these areas and reduce pressure for their development. For recreation and open space areas, the Plan was concerned with preserving sufficient area to serve a growing population. Increased development, the Plan suggested, would lead to the loss of informal recreational areas and wildlife habitats.

The Plan's Development Objectives sought to "Preserve environmental quality and natural assets", and "Enhance access to an increased range of recreation opportunities". These were expressed in the Lower Maninland Development Concept as urban areas "... surrounded by productive farmland, stable rural areas, and protected environmental and recreational areas". In the Development Strategy, the Plan sought to "Protect farmland, floodplain, and natural assets from urban and industrial development", and "Develop and enhance the use of farmland and other natural resources for the long term benefit of the Lower Mainland".

Implementation of the strategy was through the land area designations and natural assets policies. The land area designations were used to protect the integrity of the agricultural, floodplain, and park areas, and the quality of the rural and environmentally sensitive areas. In areas where land area designation was not appropriate, the Plan's natural assets policies sought to protect biologically important features and outdoor recreation assets. Maps identified these features, which included significant fish, bird and wildlife habitat, unique ecological features, distinctive natural landscapes, beaches, walking trails, and fishing bars. These policies were to be used in the administration of the Plan, incorporated in municipal official community plans, and used by senior government agencies in management practices.

c) The Public Purpose of Environmental Policies

The central public purpose of environmental policies in the Livable Region Strategy and Official Regional Plan is captured by the development concept of the original ORP -- to create "Cities in a Sea of Green". Maintenance of Greater Vancouver's natural enviromental quality is among the most strongly held public objectives. The strategies have been directed to ensuring that as the region grows the environmental assets which give Greater Vancouver its natural character are retained. The policies can be separated into two categories - those which deal with the countryside, farmland and floodplain, and those concerned with recreation areas and the protection of environmentally important areas.

The public purposes of countryside, farmland and floodplain policies may be characterized as follows:

- To protect good agricultural land. Farmland provides an open and natural landscape which enhances the region's environmental quality. The region has among the best soils and climate for farming. Although fairly small, the region's agricultural industry provides employment, fresh farm products, and its maintenance is a hedge against greater reliance on foreign agricultural areas.

- To minimize development in the floodplain. Both the LRP and ORP reinforced this longstanding regional objective.

The public purposes of the recreation and natural asset policies are as follows:

- To protect, expand and develop the system of public parks. Increased parkland and the development of parks were viewed as necessary both to improve the level of recreation service and to provide for anticipated population growth.

- To protect the region's unique natural assets. A wide variety of purposes were involved in the protection of natural features relating to the region's recreation opportunities, environmental quality, and visual appearance.

2. CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR REGIONAL POLICY

a) Current Policy

i. To protect good agricultural land

Land designated for agriculture in Greater Vancouver has steadily eroded during the past decade as land has been used for residential and industrial development. The public purposes for farmland protection underlying the LRP and ORP, however, remain valid.

The landscape values of agricultural land will become more important as the developed urban areas expand. The public objective has been to achieve an environment of openness and greenery in which the natural areas are woven throughout the developed areas. As the urban areas are developed more intensively and those south of the Fraser River expand, the farm areas will be a more important ingredient in achieving this quality.

Agricultural industries provide a small part of the region's economy. Employment, however, has been growing with the increasing number of intensive and export-oriented farm industries. As the region's population grows the demand for locally-produced farm products will also grow.

A third public purpose in farmland protection has been as a hedge against the need for greater self-reliance if imported agricultural products were for some reason reduced. This purpose, which contributes to the region's resilience to the increasing uncertainties of the international economy, will remain valid during the next decade.

As discussed in PART 2, the regional strategy should address the protection of farmland by continuing to direct major transportation improvements and development pressure towards the east where there is an adequate supply of suitable land over the longer term.

ii. To minimize development in the floodplain.

This public purpose remains generally valid, particularly given the issue of public liability. Directing development pressure away from floodplain areas has been discussed in PART 2.

iii. To protect, develop and expand the Regional Parks system.

This public purpose remains valid to protect important natural assets and provide public recreation space. The LRP strategy should provide a context for regional parks development.

iv. To protect the region's natural assets and environmental quality

Protecting those areas which contribute to the environmental quality of the region but are not within parks was a major public purpose in both the LRP and ORP. It will remain so during the next decade. These areas, which have a major influence on the naturalness of the region, are under increasing pressure from expanding urban development.

b) New Public Purposes

There are a number of environmental issues of current public concern which should have greater prominence or a place in a contemporary statement of the LRP.

The recent introduction of a public air quality index reflects growing public interest in the issue. Increased public sensitivity to air quality may result in more stringent standards. The increasing number of vehicles, which are the source of much visual air pollution, suggests that even with higher industrial standards air quality is likely to continue to be an issue.

Water quality is closely connected with the protection of natural assets such as fish spawning and rearing areas and recreational assets such as swimming beaches. This issue has risen in prominence with the attention given to the commercial and recreational value of the Fraser River Estuary and the closing of swimming beaches. The sources of water quality degradation and the responsibilities for maintaining quality are complex. The municipalities, however, can partially address the issue through the GVRD's programs of source control and liquid waste treatment.

The noise environment was raised in the Livable Region Strategy, and a model noise bylaw for municipalities was subsequently prepared. Many municipalities now have bylaws and there may be little further that can be done on a regional basis other than to continue to emphasize that the level of noise has a substantial effect on the perception of environmental quality.

The movement and disposal of dangerous and hazardous goods is of increasing public concern and should be addressed. This affects personal safety, and poses a threat to the natural environment.

3. CONCLUSIONS

A long-standing public objective has been the development of Greater Vancouver as a region which retains a high quality natural character as it grows. The attractiveness of the region is to a substantial degree shaped by the wide range of public parks, the landscapes and natural areas woven throughout the developed areas, the views of the mountains, the habitats for fish, birds and animals which exist within the region, and air and water quality which surpasses most urban areas. This natural character is the source of much of the region's international identity and prestige, and has distinct economic benefits for the tourist industry and for businesses seeking a high quality setting. Maintaining and enhancing this character is a major public purpose for the LRP.

Addressing this issue requires a wide range of actions. The LRP and ORP focussed on regional parks and the protection of natural assets during the time of development. This appears to be being pursued through the GVRD Regional Parks program, municipal community plans, and the actions of senior governments, although there has been no recent research which analyses whether the collective actions will achieve the desired objective. The LRP should continue to support and provide a context for these efforts. In addition, the LRP should provide greater prominence to other environmental concerns, such as air and water quality.

The public is increasingly health-conscious, with a desire for clean air, clean water, and an environment which facilitates fitness. Creating a healthy region should be one method for communicating environmental policies. These contribute not only to livability but also to the region's economic attractiveness.

PART 7 - CENTRES

1. CURRENT POLICY

a) The Livable Region Strategy

The Livable Region Strategy's policy to "Build Regional Town Centres" has been one of the most prominent regional development themes during the past decade. It has become part of the public and political consciousness, and has been incorporated into municipal community plans.

The strategy was based on similar objectives expressed in the 1966 Official Regional Plan "... to form a series of compact regional towns each with its own business and civic centre ... complementing a regional business, social and financial core in downtown Vancouver", and the GVRD Board's 1972 resolution to "... develop office centres or regional town centres outside of downtown and decentralize some downtown growth to these centres." The focus of the policy has evolved over the years to refect varying concerns. It has, however, been consistent in seeking to concentrate some suburban higher density commercial and residential development and to create centres which contribute both to the efficiency with which Greater Vancouver functions and to the quality and enjoyment of the region.

The regional town centre strategy was rooted in four basic objectives. First, they were intended to provide attractive locations for office development as alternatives to downtown Vancouver and areas around the core. This would increase the rate of suburban employment growth thereby helping to improve the regional jobs and labour force balance. Further, providing alternative office locations was seen as increasing downtown Vancouver's potential for greater diversity and additional housing.

Second, regional town centres were intended to increase the variety of services in suburban areas, providing centres for cultural, educational, and specialized facilities closer to where people live, and more interesting work environments for suburban employees. This was seen as both improving the quality of suburban communities and providing an attractive and necessary context for stimulating suburban office development. The diversity was intended to keep the centres active during the day and into the evening.

Third, major suburban centres were seen as facilitating improvement of the public transit system and accessibility for those without a car by increasing the proportion of

regional development which could justify high quality transit service. They were intended to help improve the cost-effectiveness of rapid transit by increasing the number of transit commuter trips and encouraging travel in both directions on the system. Additionally, by providing transit interchanges for the bus system, they were intended to afford better access to suburban centres from the surrounding service area.

Fourth, regional town centres were intended to distribute the costs and benefits of higher density development somewhat more equitably than might otherwise occur. While growth was seen as producing tax revenue, there was also the concern that it results in disruption to existing business and residential communities and necessitates costly infrastructure.

Burnaby Metrotown, Downtown New Westminster, Coquitlam Town Centre, and Whalley-Guildford in Surrey were designated as regional town centres. The choice was based upon a number of criteria, principally related to guiding employment growth in a direction which would offer maximum transportation benefits. While the policy outlined the overall character of the centres, it was recognized that each would develop uniquely within its own setting and time-frame -- Burnaby Metrotown and Downtown New Westminster relatively sooner through revitalization of older developed areas, and Coquitlam Town Centre and Whalley-Guildford relatively later as areas of new development in expanding residential communities.

While the strategy predominantly focussed on the regional town centres it also addressed downtown Vancouver and the smaller municipal centres. Downtown Vancouver was intended to remain and develop as the major cultural and business centre for the province. Concern was expressed, however, that if the core continued to attract the majority of office development and employment, it would result in disruption of neighbourhoods by downtown-destined traffic and development of a dehumanized environment through over-concentration of office towers. Regional town centres were seen as relieving some of these pressures.

The smaller municipal town centres, and district and neighbourhood centres were also mentioned. The qualities which were seen as valuable for the regional town centres, such as the concentration of offices, cultural facilities, housing and transportation, were also seen as important objectives for the smaller centres. This concentration was seen as not only improving the quality of the centres but

also providing some of the preconditions for designation as a regional town centre if desirable in the future. Specifically mentioned were the Lonsdale area on the North Shore and Brighouse in Richmond.

The strategy was to be implemented through refining the concept for each location and reserving adequate land, govenment office decentralization, action by the City of Vancouver to encourage office decentralization, and the development of ALRT linking the centres and downtown Vancouver.

b) The Official Regional Plan

While the concept of town centers was lodged in the original Official Regional Plan, the strategy was expanded and many of the features of the Livable Region Strategy incorporated when the Plan was updated in 1980. The Plan included a specific section on centres which encouraged:

- continued development of downtown Vancouver as the primary business, commercial, and cultural centre of the region and province;

- development of four designated regional town centres within the GVRD and five Fraser Valley towns as centres for growth in offices, employment, shopping and cultural facilities; and,

- development of centres as a focus for transportation, particularly higher capacity transit and transit interchanges.

A map accompanying the policy identifies the regionally significant centres within the GVRD -- the metropolitan core of downtown Vancouver, the four regional town centres, and other major centres such as Brighouse, Lougheed, Park Royal and Port Coquitlam town centre.

The Official Regional Plan's policies on centres were to be implemented through the actions of local and senior governments. These were to include focussing transportation and transit services on centres, giving centres priority in public investment decisions, reflecting the centres policy in community plans, and providing sufficient density in local development bylaws to achieve the level of activity appropriate to the centres.

c) The Public Purposes of Centres Policies

Centres policies have been prominent in both the Livable Region Strategy and Official Regional Plan. The following are the main public purposes of the strategies:

- To provide attractive locations for office development in the suburbs. This was intended to encourage suburban employment growth thereby improving the suburban jobs to labour force balance and the commuter transportation situation.

- To create "important places" in the suburbs through concentration of higher density commercial and residential development, and public and cultural services. This was intended to improve the quality of suburban areas. It was also expect to give "shape" to the region and to enhance its activity pattern as a whole by creating a more efficient distribution of facilities and services.

- To provide foci for development of the transit system. By increasing the proportion of regional development in the centres, it was expected that a higher transit ridership could be achieved and thereby a higher quality service and greater accessibility.

2. CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR REGIONAL POLICY

a) Current Policy

i. To help to increase the rate of suburban employment growth.

As discussed in PART 2, the distribution of employment growth during the past decade and anticipated for the coming decade has been generally in keeping with the strategy's objectives. This is largely the result of population serving employment following residential growth and suburban industrial development. While the regional town centres are attracting office development, it has been primarily for firms which need a suburban location.

The rate of regional office floorspace growth is expected to slow during the coming decade. The surplus of floorspace in downtown Vancouver, and thereby the competitive rental rates, suggest that firms will not be squeezed out for economic reasons. Rather, firms locating in the suburbs will be those which require

easy access to the region as a whole, which locate in the suburbs as a result of government policy, or which find the amenities offered by a suburban location attractive. The challenge for regional town centres will be creating an atmosphere which offers marginal firms, ones which could choose to locate either downtown or in the suburbs, an attractive location.

ii. To create important places in the suburbs which contain a variety of commercial, residential, and public service uses.

As anticipated, the four regional town centres are developing uniquely at their own pace and establishing their own identities. During the past decade they have established or developed a physical presence which, while less than anticipated in the strategy, has been sufficient to increase their prominence as "important places" in the region.

All of the centres have experienced significant development during the past decade, and it would appear that building activity will continue. The intended mix of uses is generally being achieved, although retail development continues to dominate and, with the exception of New Westminster, the centres convey the physical impression of "shopping centre" rather than "town centre". The development of office space has lagged, largely because the suburban office market interested in a town centre location as opposed to an industrial park or highway location is small.

The challenges for the coming decade vary according to the centre. In general, they involve continuing to increase the level and mix of uses, with particular emphasis on a larger office component, and improving the physical design to provide a more cohesive town centre atmosphere.

iii. To provide foci for the transit system.

The regional town centres of Burnaby Metrotown and Downtown New Westminster have clearly acted as foci for the SkyTrain system and the restructuring of the feeder bus system. In part, the recent development activity in these centres can be attributed to the attention focussed on them by development of the Skytrain. Transit is also a factor in the other centres. There

is, for example, a park-and-ride lot in Coquitlam Town Centre with a bus link to the SkyTrain and B.C. Transit is investigating a major bus interchange. Extension of the SkyTrain to Whalley is under discussion.

During the coming decade the challenge will be to continue development of the SkyTrain to complete linking of the regional town centres, and further measures to focus local bus transit on the centres.

b. New Public Purposes

There appear to be two new public purposes with respect to centres -- the formal addition of Lonsdale and Richmond Centre as regional town centres, and a greater emphasis on the hierarchy of centres rather than just regional town centres.

As mentioned previously, the Lonsdale area and Richmond Centre were mentioned in the Livable Region Strategy document as possible future regional town centres. They were not designated at the time since North Vancouver City was not certain that the Lonsdale area should achieve the scale intended for regional town centres, and it was felt that designating Richmond Centre would act contrary to the policy to direct development away from the floodplain and farmland.

The inclusion of these two areas as regional town centres was discussed by the Technical Planning Committee and the GVRD Board Planning Committee in 1982/3 as part of a review of centres policy. This review was terminated in early 1984 as a result of the change in status of regional planning. While generally accepted informally, the designation of the centres has never been formally discussed or adopted.

Second, the contemporary statement of the Livable Region Stratgegy should give greater prominence to the hierarchy of centres. Downtown Vancouver and the smaller municipal centres were addressed in the Livable Region Strategy document and Official Regional Plan but their role and importance in development of the region tended to be lost beneath the emphasis on regional town centres.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The region's centres have played a key role in previous regional strategies and should continue to do so. They are one of the main elements in the region's structure, providing foci for higher density development and a basis for the transportation network. They contribute to efficient functioning and livability, and help to give "shape" to the region.

A contemporary statement of the Livable Region Strategy should continue to support the development of centres and emphasize the role of all scales of centres:

- downtown Vancouver which provides an international focus for both Greater Vancouver and the province.

- the regional town centres where emphasis should be placed on extending the SkyTrain to connect Whalley-Guildford and Coquitlam Town Centre, identifying additional major centres, and continuing to develop the mix of uses and the "town centre" atmosphere.

- the smaller municipal centres where emphasis should be placed on the mix of uses and their contribution to the region's function and livability.

PART 8 - MAJOR THEMES FOR A CONTEMPORARY STATEMENT OF THE LIVABLE REGION STRATEGY.

The purpose of this chapter is to consolidate the main conclusions presented in the foregoing chapters. Together, these themes form the basis for a contemporary statement of the Livable Region Strategy for the next 10 to 15 years.

1. GOALS FOR GREATER VANCOUVER

The following broad themes were identified as goals for the Livable Region Strategy:

- A Region in Nature. This goal seeks to maintain and enhance the region's close-to-nature character.
- An Economy of Growth and Change. This goal seeks a strong and growing economy, and one which is adapting to the changing international economy.
- Mobility for People, Goods, and Services. This goal seeks a region in which it is not difficult to travel to work, to shopping areas, to recreation, or to move goods.
- A Healthy and Safe Region. This goal seeks an environment which is safe and which is conducive of good physical and mental health.
- An Equitable Region. This goal seeks to ensure that the costs and benefits of regional development are equitably distributed and that the situation of the disadvantaged is improved.
- An Efficient Region. This goal seeks the most effective return for public expenditure.

2. HOUSING

The review indicated that the major housing-related themes expressed in the Livable Region Strategy and Official Regional Plan remain a generally valid framework. Prominent are three distinct themes.

First, suburban residential development should continue to be generally directed eastward. Transportation development should continue to favour the North East Sector and Surrey areas where there is capacity for growth which does not affect farmland or floodplain.

The impact and implications of alternative distributions should be researched. Specifically, the review indicated the need to examine whether a higher than trend rate of growth should be encouraged in West Richmond since the area offers the potential for additional ground-oriented housing land in proximity to central Vancouver.

Second, increased opportunities for residential growth should be encouraged in the City of Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminster. The Burrard Peninsula contains ample capacity for employment growth; more capacity for residential growth is required to maintain or improve the jobs to labour force balance and thereby reduce the growth of long distance commuting.

Third, increased emphasis should be placed on concentrating higher density residential development in centres. Trends suggest a declining rate of apartment construction. A significant proportion of this development will have to be concentrated in centres if they are to achieve the mixed use quality desired.

3. EMPLOYMENT

The review indicated a significant shift in how employment should be viewed in the Livable Region Strategy. In the former strategies employment was largely an issue of distributing job growth to achieve a better transportation flow. Employment prospects for the next decade suggest continued high unemployment and the need for the regional economy to adapt to a new international economic environment. The regional development strategy will have to do two things. First, it should identify economic sectors where the region should focus its economic growth actions, such as tourism and those higher technology industrial and service sectors where Greater Vancouver has an advantage. Second, it should encourage regional development initiatives which facilitate and support economic growth.

Notwithstanding the change towards an emphasis on economic growth, the review suggests that much of the employment-related framework provided by the Livable Region Strategy remains valid. This includes:

- achieving a reasonable balance in the distribution of employment between the central part of the region and the outer suburbs for both transportation and equity reasons. Forecasts suggest continued employment growth in the City of Vancouver and significant labour force growth south of the Fraser River, with resulting growth in long distance commuting. Supporting suburban employment growth should continue to be emphasized.
- concentrating higher density commercial development in centres, particularly regional town centres. Commercial development will be slower in the future and there will have to be increased emphasis on the location of higher density commercial development in centres if they are to achieve the "important place" character desired.

4. TRANSPORTATION

Development of an efficient transportation system remains a central purpose for a contemporary statement of the Livable Region Strategy. Three main themes should be emphasized.

First, emphasis should be given to developing a coordinated transportation and land use development strategy, and a shared intergovernmental agenda for pursuing it. Road, transit and land use responsibilities for Greater Vancouver are dispersed and major transportation decisions are being made in an uncoordinated manner. Under discussion are a number of major public expenditures, exceeding $1 billion in cost. Governments will have to decide which will provide the greatest improvement in mobility and should be started now, and which should be started later. Maximizing transportation accessibility while minimizing the burden of financing transportation facilities and operation are required if Greater Vancouver is to remain livable and economically competitive.

Second, regional development trends suggest no change in the pattern of growing long distance commuting and increased travel congestion. Notwithstanding more counter-flow and cross-regional commuting, forecasts suggest continued travel growth in the major corridors. There needs to be continued emphasis on increased opportunities for residential development in the Burrard Peninsula close to job growth, and an increased rate of employment growth in the outer suburbs close to labour force growth, particularly south of the Fraser River.

Third, greater emphasis needs to be given to transportation measures which maintain livability and enhance the regional economy. The protection of neighbourhoods should be a major objective in transportation improvements. Ensuring the efficient movement of goods is necessary to facilitate economic growth.

5. ENVIRONMENT

Greater Vancouver's natural environment is a major force shaping its character. The public parks and natural areas, the wildlife habitats within the region, the scenic views, and the air and water quality all contribute to a region in nature. The review reinforced the need to maintain and enhance this character, not only because it contributes to the livability of the region, but also because it has economic value for the tourist and other industries. Two major themes should be emphasized in a contemporary statement of the Livable Region Strategy.

First, the strategy should continue to support and provide a context for development of the parks system and the protection of natural assets which are not located in parks. Particularly important is the retention of natural assets and the natural character of the region at the time of development.

Second, increased importance should be given to improving water and air quality. Degraded water quality has had an impact on aquatic and waterbird habitats, and on public swimming beaches. Particular emphasis should be placed on improvements in the Fraser River estuary. The region has reasonable air quality, compared with many other areas, and it is a feature which should be maintained and enhanced.

The review indicates the need for an analysis of natural assets protection measures. While community plans generally identify parks acquisition and important features to be retained at the time of development, it is not clear whether they add up to an adequate natural assets protection program on a regional basis.

6. CENTRES

Centres play a key role in determining the regional structure. They are the "important places" in the region, providing foci for higher density development and a framework for the transportation network, particularly public transit.

The review indicated that the regional town centre concept should be continued and reinforced. Two additional centres should be included - the Lonsdale area and Richmond Centre. Greater emphasis should be placed on the different roles and character of the centres, and the pace with which they will develop.

The importance of connecting the major centres with transit should continue to be emphasized. The success of the Burnaby Metrotown and Downtown New Westminster regional town centres demonstrates that higher capacity transit can act as a catalyst in stimulating growth. The strategy should continue to support extension of the system to link the other major centres.

The review also indicated that greater prominence in the strategy should be given to the roles of downtown Vancouver and the smaller municipal centres. Downtown Vancouver is the location of many highest order activities for Greater Vancouver and the province, and it the major focus of transportation facilities in the region. It is Greater Vancouver's international business and tourism face, and an important element in the region's economic growth prospects. The smaller municipal centres should also have a higher profile. They contribute significantly to the region's character and livability, and function similar to the regional town centres but at a smaller scale as foci for higher level services and transit.

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

The contemporary statement of the Livable Region Strategy is an expression of goals for Greater Vancouver -- what kind of region municipalities want to create -- and objectives -- what has to be achieved to work towards the goals. It will be advisory, with an emphasis on goals and a broad development concept for the region.

There are two intended avenues of implementation. First, it is intended that the concepts be incorporated in municipal community plans and actions. Municipalities will be asked to adopt the strategy to signify general agreement with the goals and development concept. Second, the strategy is intended to be used as a framework for intermunicipal and intergovernmental actions by the Policy Coordinating Committee or GVRD Board. It is to provide a framework for raising and discussing issues of regional importance, and a basis for monitoring and policy analysis by Development Services Committees.

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